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Sochi/Сочи 2014: Olympic Winter Games between High Mountains and Seaside

Kurt Scharr, Ernst Steinicke and Axel Borsdorf

- 1 The decision of the International Olympic Committee in 2007 to award the Winter Games 2014 to the Russian resort Sochi on the Caucasian Black Sea coast brought a region into public focus that was hitherto little-known in the Western hemisphere, but has in the former Soviet Union and in present-day Russia (Russian Federation, R.F.) traditionally enjoyed considerable prominence. The Black Sea City of Sochi was introduced as the hub of the Games, under the motto “Olympic Winter Games In A Subtropical Paradise”. Until 2007 Sochi was known in the Western world as a summer resort for the elite of the Soviet working class and later for the higher social classes of the new Russia. Thus, the suitability of the place for Winter Games may have been a surprise, even for geographers. Obviously, political change and considerable reconsolidation of centralized power as well as the personal engagement of V.V. Putin played a major role in the assignment by the Olympic Committee. We should not forget that already in 1989 and immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union (1993) and again in 2002 Sochi had applied as a host city – although without success.
- 2 Since the collapse of the USSR, many changes took place in this remote region of the federation. During continuous transformation processes this Black Sea region has begun, not least from economic necessity, to separate itself from the Soviet tourist structure of supply-side economics of recreation and regeneration and to explore new paths leading to satisfaction of demand. Success has not occurred in all areas. Urgently needed modernization and changes are only sparsely observable, mostly in the privatized areas of the tourism sector. “Sochi/Сочи 2014” is also expected to have a significant impact on the demography, settlement geography, the economy and the wider social system of the region and throughout Russia. The necessary adaptation measures must be completed in a relatively short time and are therefore burdened with some serious problems: the existing authoritarian-centralistic structures of the Russian Federation are in

contradiction to bottom-up processes. Nevertheless, the latter are less relevant in a civil society that is still largely absent or poorly developed. With the project СОЧИ 2014, the region has gained an instrument privileged by government, which could bring the accomplishment of accumulated structural needs within realistic reach. Clearly, affected by the limited remaining time and by the spreading financial crisis since the autumn of 2008, this political prestige project bears the risk of overly excessive demands on the region.

- 3 Hardly any scientific work relevant to the Olympic Games 2014 is yet in existence; nonetheless, older and newer – albeit mostly “gray” – literature addresses individual aspects of the region. In addition, discussions occur in domestic media, as far as the political situation in the Russian media landscape permits, about meaningfulness and backgrounds of СОЧИ 2014, whose respective motives vary substantially. Civil-societal questions about the relationship between democracy and the authoritarian style of government in the Russian Federation (Kasparov, 2008) are thereby in discussion.
- 4 Furthermore, aspects of the global financial and economic crisis in view of the reaction of the Kremlin, and the realization of the Olympic Games, but also international conflicts like the August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia are in the foreground of these debates. However, studies on tangible effects or on the overall significance of the forthcoming Games for the region, the greater Sochi area, including observance and evaluation of associated regional politics, are not available, apart from regional studies (*e.g.* Rybak *et al.*, 1994). If it finds mention at all, media coverage of the subject usually appears only indistinctly or on the periphery of the public interest (Konovalova, 2007).
- 5 The image-pregnant mega event СОЧИ 2014 is essentially a manifestation and repositioning of a resurrected “new Russia” on the international political stage in an area extremely conflict-ridden since the decay of the Soviet Union. One fundamental idea behind the Olympic Games is the event’s nation-unifying effect. In this sense, the event is essentially suitable to resolve territorial tensions on a more consent-oriented level. Overall, winter tourism in Sochi cannot draw on any tradition – the first ski lift was built in 1993. However, favorable conditions exist in climatic as well as in topographic regard. The Olympic sports facilities for the Winter Games 2014 have to be erected completely from the ground up. Sochi was until now rather a Mediterranean, *i.e.* summer climatic health resort with hardly any functional links to the hinterland – similar to the French Côte d’Azur towns – except for the migration flow to the central localities along the main traffic routes that run parallel to the coast. After the years of crisis since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and that of recuperation programs governed by state organizations, СОЧИ 2014 can be viewed as a starting point and a chance for necessary modernization of the previous health resort, as well as a proposed extension as a winter sport destination to the metropolitan region.
- 6 The main objective of this article is to provide a first glance at the location, its historic background as well as current transformation, and therefore its suitability, strengths and weaknesses, and to discuss the possibilities of using the Games as an impulse for sustainable regional development. Apart from the evaluation of the status quo of the research, this contribution seeks to obtain the necessary information from varying forms of qualitative interviews and, specifically from mapping activities.

Outline of the Caucasian Riviera Region

- 7 The City of Sochi is situated in the transition zone between European and Asian civilizations, right at the northeast coast of the Black Sea. A few hundred meters from the coastline the relief rises drastically. Only 50 km inland the foothills of the Western Caucasus reach altitudes from 2000 m to over 3300 m (Figure 1). Characteristic for the coastal fringe is its Mediterranean climate, which resembles the typical weather pattern at the Riviera or the Côte d'Azur. Two hundred sunny days a year allow an average July temperature of +23°C. On the other hand, the average January temperature is +5°C. Sochi campaigns therefore not incorrectly with the slogan: You can swim in the sea from April until October, and go skiing from October through May.
- 8 The close proximity of sea and massive mountain range, and therefore the humidity-accumulating effects of sea and high mountains in close coexistence, support the high precipitation rate in late autumn, which descends as snow in the mountainous regions. This aspect guarantees snow in the winter in the village of Krasnaya Polyana, situated less than one hour's drive from the coast at a sea level of only 520 m, where a majority of the competitions of the Olympic Winter Games will take place.
- 9 Not surprisingly flora and fauna in the area are of great variety. As early as 1924, a nature park was established under state administration on the northern and southern slopes of the Western Caucasus. It stretches over more than 280,000 hectares, whereby 302 hectares fall to the Sochi und Khosta areas. The admission to the UNESCO program "Man and Biosphere" in 1979 and the World (Natural) Heritage of Humanity designation of 1999 attest to its importance. In addition, the creation of the "National Park Sochi" (193,700 ha) in 1983 occurred with the explicit aim of methodical conservation and utilization of the natural and cultural landscape. The Greater Sochi Region itself is located on the territory of the park, which is divided into several activity zones (Figure 1).
- 10 Since the early 1990s, Sochi has belonged to the Southern Federalistic Administrative District (Juzhnyj federal'nyj okrug) and within it to the Region Krasnodarsk (Krasnodarskij Kraj) (Figure 2 and 3). Greater Sochi currently is home to a population of almost 400,000, with over 132,000 (2006) living in the central part of the City of Sochi (Tsentral'nyj Rajon).
- 11 Each of the remaining three districts (rajons) shows about half of the residents of Sochi proper (Adler 70,000; Khosta 62,000; Lasarevskij 64,000). Russian residents in the Krasnodarsk area make up the majority of ethnicities (>70%). Armenians, Ukrainians and Georgians, as well as Adygians (Cherkessians) constitute major groups, while Germans, Greeks and Tatars only represent small, regionally limited ethnic sections. Urban and rural population is distributed fairly evenly (Census of the Russian Federation 2002).

Figure 1.



Figure 2.

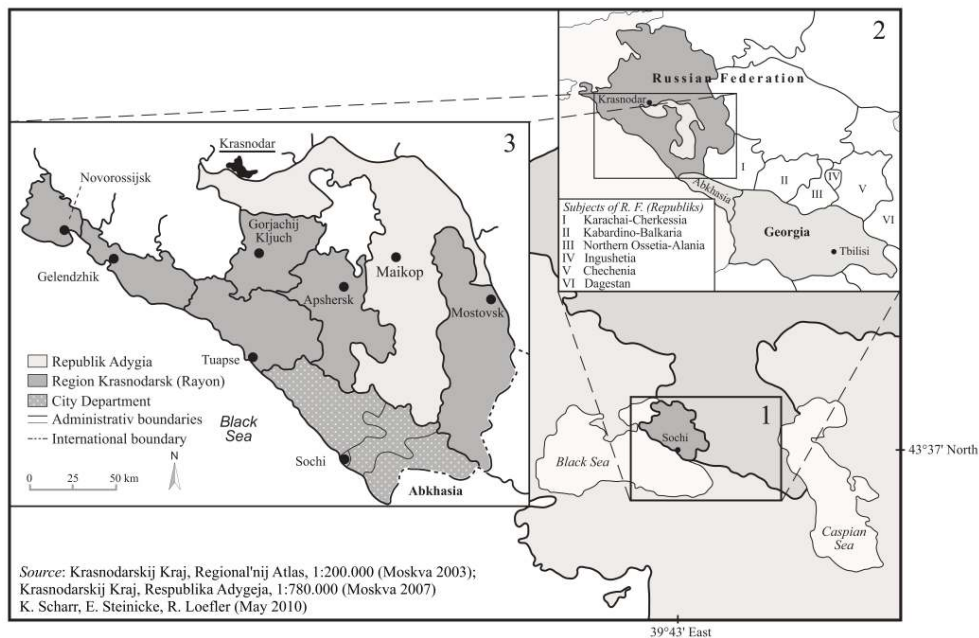
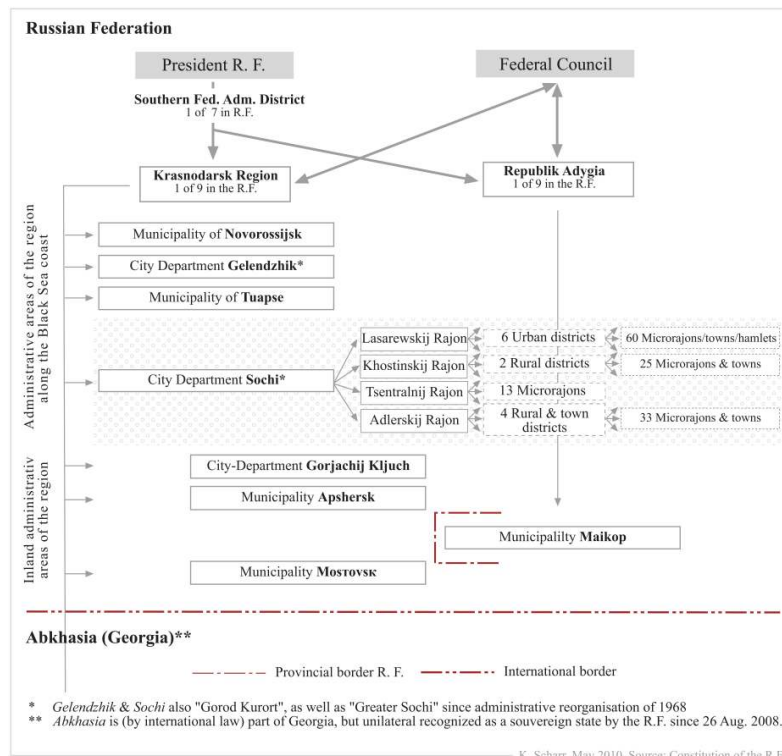


Figure 3.



Development and transformation of a tourist-oriented region

- 12 The analysis of the relationship between persistent structures, traditional ways of thinking, and improved services such as customer-oriented trends leads to a comprehension of the development of the former Soviet spas on the Russian Black Sea coast since the beginning of the diverse transformation processes during the last years of the USSR. Even before the decision to assign the 2014 Winter Olympics to Sochi, the seaside towns along the Black Sea were forced to counteract the considerable economic decline. The legacy of the Soviet Union is nonetheless still present in many ways. Thus, a focal point of this study will be questions concerning the development of the health resort Sochi and the fundamentals of the Soviet view of Turizm/ТУРИЗМ.

The pre-revolutionary period at the Black Sea coast

- 13 Appeared in 1888 the Russian Caucasus Tourism Guide called Sochi the finest and most-visited spa resort on the Black Sea coast (MOSKVICHI' ²²1915, 397). Even then this small district capital of the Black Sea governorate looked back at a substantial development. In a war that lasted decades, ending in 1864, Russia struggled to incorporate the Caucasus permanently into the Tsarist Empire. This conflict shaped the region far into the late 19th century – a battle for political dominance and state sovereignty, ultimately carrying its impact into the immediate present, such as in the question of the recognition of Abkhazia. Russia used subsequent peace resolutions to force the emigration of whole

populations (Adygians) (GUMPPENBERG & STEINBACH, 2008; KING, 2008, pp 92-98; FROLOVA, 1999). Around 1900, a targeted settlement policy accomplished the stabilization of the area and a return to a promising economic foundation.

- 14 On the threshold to the 20th century the rather small proportion of the Russian middle and upper classes became increasingly interested in the slowly developing domestic areas, in particular those in the South of the Empire. The Caucasus as a region, however, had already begun to adopt the romantically illuminated picture that A.S. Pushkin's 'Prisoner of the Caucasus' (1821) will subsequently propel to considerable public influence (KING, 2008, p 108).
- 15 The favorable natural conditions promoted the discovery of Sochi as a health resort, and as early as 1915 a remarkable number of noble villas and resort hotels characterized the town (such as "Kavkazskaya Riviera" still operating under that name). The nobility and the wealthy citizens preferred the higher elevations off the coast and away from the widespread swamps around the estuaries. In many cases the later Soviet sanatoria emerged from these residences. The population of the city grew accordingly in the years before WW I (1903: 1352; 1904: 7328; 1905: 8163; 1915: 10 860; census results cited after KONZEVAJA, 2007, p. 92). The local administration however, equipped with only a small budget, was soon confronted with the limits of its own productivity potential. The rail connections, completed during WWI, accelerated the development of the spa town and set an important foundation for the Soviet expansion after 1918. A suitable harbour capable of accommodating offshore vessels was added, but not until 1950.

"Turizm" as a state event

- 16 Even though an individualization of domestic tourism had been occurring mostly over the Soviet Union's last two decades (NOACK, 2004; 2006), the basic pattern of welfare function in tourism remained prominent. Turizm – the Soviet variety of tourism – was understood as an element of the state's measures of provision and was not part of the individual lifestyle. The system-stabilizing community characters as well as social control were integral parts of turizm as a concept of governmental strategy. The supply-side economics, whose chronic deficit was part of everyday life, were in the foreground (PAESLER, ³2007). The individual tourism of the West was viewed as commercially oriented. The socialist tourism in physical, mental and ideological terms was finally aimed at purposefully perfecting the Soviet citizen; leisure and recreation in the "western" conception were hardly justified (GORSUCH, 2006, p. 2).
- 17 The regional priorities with the highest capacity for tourism were developed as a mass phenomenon mainly during the Brezhnev era. The Caucasus region and the Black Sea coast alone represented almost 40 percent of all the beds available for tourism within the Soviet Union (NOACK, 2006, p 284). The Soviet statistics for the tenth five-year plan (1976-1980) showed an impressive 47 million tourists seeking revitalization (not counting children's camps), which were recorded in the facilities of the labor unions for this period alone (CHASOV, 1983, p 12). Despite this, the positive news must not be overestimated, considering the chronic undersupply in contrast to the huge and increasingly growing demand in this economic segment. The public authorities were aware of this deficit, and criticism for it could be voiced publicly without repercussions (ANONYMUS, 1977). Nevertheless, the amount of financing remained poor and quite far from the demand.

Vacation spots were highly subsidized by the state (accommodation, travel, services, etc.) and therefore extremely affordable. Until the demise of the Soviet Union, for the majority of vacation candidates, however, the successful bid for one of these coveted spots was subject to the allocation of a rare Putyovka – a kind of travel voucher – by their employer or the trade union.

- 18 Within the USSR Sochi counted among the most developed tourist regions. Unlike the Crimea, which prided itself in a formative pre-revolutionary tradition (summer residences of the Tsar's family), Sochi emerged as a spa resort largely by method of deliberate development, from the drawing boards of Soviet planners in Moscow. The 1919 decree issued by V.I. Lenin, 'On Health Resorts of All-State Importance', laid the foundation for building a large number of 'health palaces' for the new working class clientèle. In time, the soviet party aristocracy settled around J.V. Stalin, who had chosen the area for his favorite dacha. Leading architects of the Soviet Union drafted facilities. The first "Master Plan for the Reconstruction of the Health Resort Sochi-Mazesta" was presented and begun in 1933.

Photograph 1: The Sanatory Ordjonikidze opened in 1937 (Scharr, Nov. 2008)



- 19 Interrupted by WWII, during which most sanatoria were rededicated to the needs of the Red Army, the second master plan followed in 1967. In direct correlation with this concept of development was the fact that in the same year the Bureau of the Confederation of Soviet Labor Unions awarded first place among the 450 spas of the USSR to Sochi. At the same time, a single administrative region "Greater Sochi" was established (1968), which amalgamated the seaside towns Lazarevskoye, Sochi, Khosta and Adler to one municipality with a total length of 145 km along the coast (Figure 2). As a result, the population increased significantly in this conurbation of linear structure (1939: 71,000; 1959: 127,000; 1970: 224,000; 1981: 300,000; 2002: 397,000; *ENCYCLOPEDIA*, 1973; CHASOV, 1983, p 219; <http://www.perepis2002.ru>). The "brand" Sochi, considering the country's size and population, has already demonstrated major stability among the low number of recreation centers in the USSR. Thus, Sochi became synonymous with the "Soviet

Riviera,” and therefore it appears only logical that the territorial restructuring in 1968 deliberately drew from this model (STADELBAUER, 1986, pp 9, 20).

Problems of reorientation and redesign

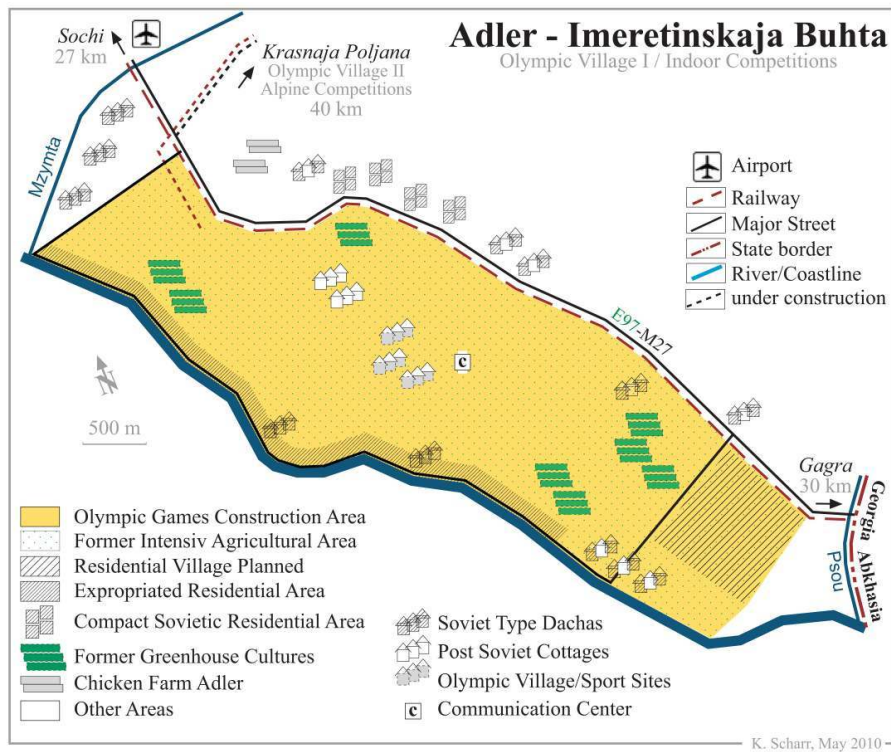
- 20 With the emerging reforms under M.S. Gorbachev and the developments after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the difference between recreation (turizm) and tourism – formerly only a theoretical one – moved toward the western conception. While previously financed by what was obtainable under the chronic deficit, for the majority of the population, financing for the individual could no longer be achieved. The collapse brought the centrally organized system of operating company-owned and state recreation homes into a deep crisis. The sanatoria facilities suffered under the retreat of the state, the chronic financial shortage, and the decline of the formerly domineering trade unions. Only individual key enterprises or ministries were able to further afford their own sanatoria for their employees. However, these institutions were often privatized and made accessible to the “free” market. The tone of the offer, as the initial quote implies, was quite different; the structures often remained in the old system.
- 21 The transformation processes during the 1990s along the Russian Black Sea coast became obvious in a substantial decline in the number of overnight stays, except during the periods of the all-Russian film festival Kinotavr held annually in Sochi since 1991. The nearby civil war in the Georgian Abkhazia (the state border is about 60 km from Sochi centre) added a politically insecure situation, a conflict that in 1992/93 led to urban waste respectively partial destruction of well-known spas such as Gagra and Sukhumi (STADELBAUER, 2001).
- 22 The presidency of V.V. Putin (2000-2008) finally gave the “Caucasian Riviera” a lasting impulse. Primarily in his role as Head of State Putin was personally involved in the bid for the venue of the Games, and as Prime Minister he is still the driving force behind their realization. Therefore the events between Georgia and the Russian Federation in August 2008 can be seen in a clear political connection with the decision of the Olympic Committee to award the 2014 Games to Sochi (SAPPER, 2008). Thereby Moscow wants to demonstrate on the one hand its newly attained power and self-confidence; on the other hand it intends to send a clear signal that the Caucasus belongs to its undisputed sphere of influence (“nearer foreign countries”). In addition to that, the Russian Federation has invested millions for some years into the seaside towns of Abkhazia (SEMIKIN, 2009), which Moscow has unilaterally recognized as a sovereign state since September 2008.
- 23 Even the effects of the economic crisis make a moving away by Moscow from its plans in Sochi highly unlikely. While government officials painfully register a certain reluctance by private investors, they simultaneously refer to the strict observance of all construction schedules. The overall management and coordination of all activities around СОЧИ 2014 are the responsibility of the special commission “Orgkomitet Sochi 2014”. The control board is composed of representatives of the presidential administration, the Prime Minister and the Finance Ministry. Under the impact of delays and discontent among top government officials, cadre rotations are common. Regardless of all problems, the venue has become the epitome and prestige project of the Kremlin far beyond Russia so that from today’s perspective an act of recanting in favor of another venue appears more than improbable.

- 24 The health resort Sochi on the Caucasian Riviera, but also the emerging resort settlement of Krasnaya Polyana, planned on the drawing-board, as centres of the Olympic Winter Games 2014 are, with regard to structural aspects, still burdened with the legacy of the Soviet Union. The next chapter seeks to provide some thoughts on the subject.

Сочи 2014 – Upcoming Challenges

- 25 For the indoor and alpine competitions of the Games, two areas are provided (Imeretinskaya Buhta near Adler as well as Krasnaya Polyana), each with an Olympic Village. At both locations the infrastructure has to be built from the ground up. However, the logistic heart with the covered ice rinks, the residential areas, the press and communication center, and the international and regional transport hub, as well as all tributaries to Krasnaya Polyana, is located in the immediate coastal area of Adler (Figure 4, photograph 2). There, an intensively utilized agricultural polder area with large-scale greenhouse crops has been re-designated into construction land. Besides cottage settlements of the 1990s and a modest tourism infrastructure at the shoreline added during this time, a number of small, private farmers and vegetable growers had emerged here after the collapse of the Soviet Union. These same small-holder agricultural structures with their residents and landlords now stand in the way of the planning progress for the Imeretinskaya Buhta; many expropriation and land dispossession procedures confirm this. As evident from discussions with political leaders, it is clear from the outset that no compensation equivalent to the actual land prices takes place; therefore it is unlikely that the owners are able to afford the newly created housing space. Here, similar practices can be observed as they were documented before the Beijing Olympic Games of 2008 (FLÜCHTER & WANG, 2008).

Figure 4.



Photograph 2: Imeretinskaya Buhta: Remains of former agricultural infrastructure (Schar, Nov. 2009)



- 26 In Krasnaya Polyana, where the Olympic Village II is being built, the proximity of ski slopes and lifts to the National Park as well as to the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve creates a considerable potential for conflict. In addition, the canyon between the coast and Krasnaya Polyana represents a major traffic problem. Although the private operators

meanwhile emphasize the current coordination of work in partnership with the park administration, the almost unrestrained dominance of economic interests, supported by politics, is setting the tone. The Olympic Village with 2,600 beds is being created around the complex Rosa Khutor where all the necessary facilities are concentrated on approximately 50 hectares. Including ski lifts and slopes, this section encompasses more than 500 hectares and thus extends directly into the border area of the biosphere reserve. In addition, there are already skiing facilities of other consortia (Al'pika Service) in existence or are under construction (Gornaya Karuzel'). The Grand Hotel Polyana, which is currently the only five-star operation in Krasnaya Polyana, is located, together with the residence of the president of the R.F., in a small side valley. With the ski resort 'Laura,' built by Gazprom, it represents another key area of development.

- 27 With the aid of territorial reclassification in the 1960s has begun a process of de-concentration of tourist infrastructure and unbundling of the industrial sector along Sochi's narrow coastal zone. This effort appears at risk in the light of the upheaval after 1991 and the decision for the Winter Games. Already now, a concentration caused by building activity is recognizable in the central rajon of Sochi, which increases the degree of densification. In addition, should it come to a planar demolition of the Khrushchevskas, the five-story housing complexes in the central areas of the city established under N.S. Khrushchev (TKACHEV, 2008), which has been demanded by politics, the density of tourism infrastructure would increase (Photograph 3).
- 28 Also unresolved are concerns such as an adequate supply of drinking water, the connection to central co-generation power stations, electricity, and others. The sewer systems, where any exist at all, are overextended, and wastewater for the most part is being dumped in its original state into the Black Sea (MIROLJUBOVA, 2009). In addition, according to the will of the government, the entire infrastructure of the city is to be renewed before the start of the Games (GULENOK, 2008), which appears positively utopian considering the brevity of the remaining time in relation to the project.
- 29 Beyond that, with regard to the Games and the fact that Sochi is representing a popular destination, a careful handling of environmental resources cannot be expected, even though Russia's share of subtropical regions is very low. Land use conflicts between those of the service sector willing to invest and existing establishments like the National Park Sochi or the Biosphere Reserve are virtually pre-programmed. The current degradation of the natural potential of the coastal strip is, comparative to the total region Krasnodarsk, classified as low in the current literature (ANTIPOVA, 2001). Nonetheless, locally it reaches considerable proportions, above all in view of the small scale and the regionally varying juridical character of the protection zones in the national park.
- 30 From the three main feeders into Sochi – airport, railway and port – only the (private) airport, already in the process of development, appears suitable in the medium term to bring larger crowds into the region in a reasonably short time. The railway, a traditional and efficient transportation instrument of the Soviet Union, requires a thorough renewal of the fleet, the rail system as well as the associated infrastructure. The travel time from Moscow to Adler (around 1900 km) is still more than 25 hours, and the image of the railway does not appeal in the least to the nouveau riche and the middle class. Regardless of the enormous distances, individual automobile traffic has increased since the 1990s and contributes substantially, even outside the season, to congestion gridlock in the overcrowded areas of the coastal strip. The (regional as well as trans-regional) public means of transportation meanwhile are completely overtaxed by the rising need and the

inherent condition of under-financing. For the year 2000, the tourism numbers of the Northern Caucasus had been estimated at a minimum of 30 million guests (NEFEROVA, 2001, p 348), which implies an additional increase of the stress factor had occurred in this area.

Photograph 3: Sochi Central Area (Scharr, Nov. 2008)



Perspectives & Conclusion

- 31 The entire eastern Black Sea coast of Russia, with the health resort Sochi as its central focus, developed its structural foundations during the Soviet Union era. From a Soviet model of centrally assigned and managed recreational tourism, which was affordable to the vast majority of the population, a consumption-oriented leisure tourism has evolved after 1991, in which only a few can participate in the current economic situation. The structural deficit amassed during the Soviet Union era, as it is still reflected in obsolete infrastructure and a poorly developed and barely customer-oriented service sector, amounts to a significant barrier in Moscow's current modernization efforts, which have to be implemented under great time pressure.
- 32 With the Olympic Games of 2014, the tourism season can be extended into the winter. This opens up new perspectives for the Black Sea resort, particularly regarding the domestic tourism. Nevertheless, the modernization measures prescribed by the government (top down) often bear the characteristics of Soviet actionism. Thus, from today's perspective there is no indication for sustainable development of the region, and therefore there is a real risk that the new infrastructure will not be used in the long term.
- 33 Furthermore, not only planning mistakes (e.g. traffic, lack of participation by the population, etc.) known from other tourism destinations seem to take a foothold here,

but also, the strictly central-state style of planning (“The President’s Program for Modernization of Russia of 12 November 2009”) appears to become the measure of all things. Consequently, this places the idea of sustainable development in the background. Thus СОЧИ 2014 deviates distinctly from the standards required in the international debates about mega-events – no doubt a deficit. Conflicts are almost inevitable, especially in a region as ecologically vulnerable as the subtropical zone of Western Caucasus with its slim coastal fringe and narrow valleys.

- 34 From this overall situation can thus be summarized: at the regional level, it is necessary to develop the indispensable infrastructure for СОЧИ 2014 from the very beginning and to implement it within a relatively short time. Unavoidably associated with this process are far-reaching socio-economic, demographic and settlement changes that lead to social tensions. The objectives advanced by the state for the overall project, which is being executed under considerable time pressure – in conjunction with the dominant authoritarian real constitution of the R.F. – are counterproductive for regional politics as well as for establishing a civil society.
- 35 Apart from the aforementioned deficit of sustainability, the academic lesson of СОЧИ 2014 incorporates that Olympic Games cannot only be viewed from an economic point of view – as ex ante-assessments for Munich 2018 often ignored (e.g. PREUSS 2011). As already seen by the example of Beijing, a government can without hesitation dismiss the principles of the economy of sports or of sustainability when it meets the objectives of political actors.

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ABSTRACTS

The IOC's decision to accept Sochi's bid to host the 2014 Olympic Winter Games presented the Russian Government with an opportunity for international repositioning. The Caucasian War in August 2008, too, can be linked to this development. Going back to the very beginnings of the Soviet Republic, the Sochi region has achieved the tradition of a resort for health and recreation. However, these functions have so far just concentrated along the Eastern Black Sea's narrow shoreline. With regard to tourism, the 2014 Games will extend the business segment by establishing the new winter season, whereby the planned actions and measures taken will reach extreme and superlative dimensions. From this perspective, an analytical observation systematically accompanying this mega sports event even prior to its commencement will be of exceptional importance. The academic literature pertaining to the Southern part of the Western Caucasian region shows a noticeable lack of contributions in regards to emerging changes. The study focuses on aspects of regional planning and settlement, as well as on socio-economic developments. Further questions posed at the same time relating to society as a whole refer to social processes of participation and decision-making. Overall, the current transformation processes that have reached this area in 1991 will therefore accelerate significantly. The effectiveness as well as the political willingness to promote societal bottom-up processes will in the end prove to be a measuring stick of their own sustainability.

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